"The Staff Of Life"

Wood, "the staff of life" for the manufacturing department at Crown Zellerbach in Camas, first enters the pulp and paper making complex in the Woodmill Department.

The Woodmill de-barks the various species of pulp grade logs and chips them into good quality chips for the pulp mills. The Woodmill is designed to use pulp grade logs not suited for lumber or plywood, allowing for better clean up in the forests.

The Woodmill is also responsible for purchased chip unloading, hog fuel handling, chip storage, chip screening and delivery systems.

At present about half of the Camas mill's requirement for wood fiber comes in the form of logs which must be handled through the woodmill. The balance of the total requirement is filled by purchased chips and sawdust which, until a few years ago, was burned as waste in the sawmill and plywood plants of the surrounding area.

Made of concrete and steel, anchored to bedrock, the Camas Woodmill was built in 1948 and 1949, with additional alterations completed in 1952. It replaced an old wooden building on an adjacent site.

The Woodmill is a favorite part of the mill tours which several thousand people take yearly at Camas. Visitors seem fascinated by the 50-ton capacity bridge crane which is used to lift bundles of logs from the mill pond and place them on the log deck.

Another visitor favorite is the hydraulic barker which is used to remove bark and dirt from the surface of the logs with high pressure jets of water. Here water under 1400 pounds per square inch pressure literally strips the bark from the logs as they are rotated in the barker mechanism.

Following barking, the logs are fed into a massive chipper.

Purchased chips and sawdust are received by rail, truck and barge. In a normal week, the people in this department might process 150 rail cars, 300 truckloads and 8 bargeloads of this material.

Some 75 people are involved in handling this basic raw material in the Camas plant. Conrad Morasch heads the woodmill and log storage operations.